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STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE #12 (SO12)

(Conflict Reduced in Mindanao and Other Areas Vulnerable to Violence)

Collaborative farming urged to put RP veggies on global map

DAVAO CITY — “Clustering” together to achieve safe and quality produce in larger volumes is the only way the Philippines can gain a solid foothold in local and international markets, according to Peter Batt, Associate Prof. in Agri-business Marketing at the Curtin University of Technology in Perth Western Australia, a featured speaker at the recent 2nd Mindanao Vegetable Industry Congress.

Addressing the more than 400 farmers who attended the Congress, Batt stressed: “By acting

collectively, many small farmers are able to approach the market as a single business unit, thereby enabling them to improve their bargaining position. Moreover, this approach protects farmers from exploitative marketing practices.” He added that farmers who form a group can save on production and post harvest costs.

This observation is confirmed by Jasmin Agbon, Vegetable Industry Advisor for the USAID-funded Growth with Equity in Mindanao (GEM) Program. Agbon, in her presentation

on price information for vegetables said “generally, imported vegetables in supermarkets continually command better prices than Philippine products because of their quality and appearance.”

She said the challenge for Mindanao growers is to improve product quality, post harvest handling, packaging and transporting of vegetables.

According to the Department of Agriculture, about 40 percent of the country's vegetable produce goes to waste during post harvest handling.

(Source: The Daily Tribune, 9/24/05, page 8)